

## Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 OC-05 CCO-00 CIAE-00 OTPE-00

EB-07 FCC-02 NSAE-00 RSC-01 COME-00 BIB-01 OES-05

ACDA-10 DODE-00 PM-03 L-02 NASA-02 NSC-05 USIA-15

/075 W

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P 040615Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0078

UNCLAS JIDDA 0794

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR

SUBJECT: SMALL EARTH STATION TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

REF: STATE 282811

1. SAG MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTLY HAS IN USE TWO SMALL EARTH STATIONS SUPPLIED BY COMSAT GENERAL, ONE AT RIYADH AND ONE NEAR JIDDA. THEIR PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE INTERIM INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS PENDING COMPLETION OF FULL-SCALE STATIONS AT THE ABOVE SITES. THE MINISTRY IS STUDYING POSSIBILITY

OF MOVING THESE STATIONS TO OUTLYING DISTRICTS AFTER COMPLETION OF THE LARGE STATIONS, TO PROVIDE INTERNAL REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, BUT HAS NOT REACHED FIRM CONCLUSION.

2. SAG IS CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF ACQUIRING ITS OWN DOMESTIC SATELLITE, AS WELL AS PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL ARAB SATELLITE. WHILE MINISTRY OFFICIALS DO NOT YET ADMINT TO ENTHUSIASM FOR A DOMESTIC SATELLITE, THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCT THAT THEY WILL EVENTUALLY PROCEED WITH SUCH A PROGRAM. THE TYPES OF GROUND SYSTEMS WHICH MIGHT BE ELECTED ARE STILL COM-  
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PLETELY PROBLEMATICAL.

3. RESPONSES TO FACTORS POSED IN PARA 6 OF REFTEL:

A. ALL PAYMENTS FOR NEW SYSTEMS WOULD BE MADE BY CHECK ACCORDING TO A PROGRESS OF WORK SCHEDULE.

B. SAUDI ARABIA HAS IN GENERAL A PRONOUNCED BIAS IN FAVOR OF U.S. TECHNOLOGY. HOWEVER A WORSENING OF THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION COULD HAVE A VERY CHILLING EFFECT ON THE WARM AND DEEPENING ECONOMIC/POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE U.S.

C. TOTAL COST NOT RELEVANT AS LONG AS IT IS COMPETITIVE WITH OTHER SYSTEMS VIS-A-VIS CAPABILITIES AND QUALITY.

D. SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE ISSUES ARE ABSOLUTELY VITAL.

E. IRRELEVANT

F. MODERATLY IMPORTANT

G & H. PERFORMANCE AND DEMONSTRATED RELIABILITY IS OF LARGE AND EVER GROWING IMPORTANCE. SAG IN THE PAST HAS BEEN RATHER SEVERELY BURNED BY EMPHASIZING LOW-BID OVER QUALITY. THEY ARE NOW SWINGING AROUND TO BEING WILLING TO PAY TOP PRICES BUT INSISTING ON TOP QUALITY/PERFORMANCE.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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